

The damage done to the *Ascalon* does not appear to have been of a very serious nature, as this afternoon Messrs Jardine, Matheson and Co. received a telegram from Singapore stating: "*Ascalon* steaming into harbour!"

The *Singapore* states that it is estimated that the expeditionary corps in Tonquin will shortly be able to be largely reduced and that within three years it will only be necessary to retain there, as in Cochinchina, a corps of occupation numbering about 3,000 men, the complement being made up by Annamite tirailleurs and Tonquin auxiliaries.

The inquest on the body of Lan So Chai, the man who was killed by an accident at the China Sugar Refinery on Sunday, was concluded this afternoon at the Government Civil Hospital. It appeared from the medical evidence that death resulted from injuries inflicted on the head of deceased by the blow received on the left side from the piece of wood which was violently thrown from the revolving centrifugal pan.

The Concert last night, given by Signora Luisa Marchetti, was pretty well attended, and appeared to give satisfaction to those present. Of course the great attraction of the evening was the singing of Signora Marchetti. She showed herself to be a skilled contralto, with a voice capable of ranging to the highest limits of the register. There was a little hardness in her notes, but common in voices of a high register, but she sang the most difficult solos from the Italian operas with great dash and success, and received enthusiastic applause. Seldom if ever has a better vocal performance than hers been witnessed in the City Hall Theatre. Signora Marchetti, who arrived here recently from Manila, was a member of Signor Bergamaschi's Opera Company, which, after playing in the Straits and Manila, went to pieces; leaving several of the artists nearly destitute. Maestro Menecce is a brilliant performer on the piano-forte; Maestro Cattaneo accompanied the singing. The amateurs who assisted in the vocal portion of the Concert, one lady and three gentlemen, acquitted themselves in a very satisfactory manner.

A second and final Concert is announced to take place on Tuesday evening next.

The Colonial Surgeon in his report on the health of the Hongkong Police Force, describes the increase in sickness amongst the members to the longer hours of duty, and especially to the longer hours of exposure to malarial influences on night duty. Our morning contemporary, in its remarks on the report published in yesterday's issue, goes further and states that "the hours of duty were" may be remembered, lengthened by Sir John Pope Houssey after the "Wing Lok Street outrage, in 1878." As a matter of fact the hours of duty for the European members of the Force, to which Dr. Ayres' report here more particularly refers, have not been altered for the last twenty years, being still limited to six hours night duty at a spell. The few that are employed on day duty have the six hours' duty divided into two periods of three hours each, so that the actual hours of duty of the European constables are only six out of the twenty-four; and the general feeling amongst the men themselves is that the hours are very easy. It will be necessary then to look further for the cause of the increase in sickness amongst the European members of the Police Force.

As regards the Indian and Chinese branch, the hours of night duty are two hours longer than those of the Europeans, but to counterbalance this a rule was passed some time since when Chief Inspector Hooper was Acting Superintendent of Police, by which each Indian and Chinese constable, available for night duty, gets two nights in the month free of duty altogether, and it is believed that this change has exercised a beneficial influence on the health of the men.

His Excellency Li Hung-chang has memorialized the Empress with respect to the eminent services of Mr. Gustav Delring in bringing about the temporary understanding with France.—*N. C. D. News.*

The Independence Bells confirms the news of the return to Europe of Mr. Stanley; he is replaced on the Congo by the English Colonel Sir Francis de Winton, formerly aide-de-camp to the Marquis of Lorne, who is to be appointed Administrator-general of the International African Association. The health of Mr. Stanley has been much affected by his stay in Central Africa.—*N. C. D. News.*

General Gordon's new book promises to be the book—that is to say, the oldest book—of the present season, and no doubt, will create much talk. Its title is *Reflections suggested in Palestine, 1883*, and contains spiritual aspirations conveyed in the graphic and vigorous language characteristic of General Gordon. Messrs Macmillan & Co. hope to issue the work immediately.

Reviews of visitors to the City Hall Museum for the week ending 26th May, 1884:—

	European.	Chinese.
Monday	24	357
Tuesday	27	294
Wednesday	48	483
Thursday	38	274
Friday	23	308
Saturday	31	386
Sunday	—	—
Totals	203	2,072
Grand total	2,275	—

Excavations are now being conducted of man-ganese-ore, the first having been turned out by Messrs W. H. Allen, of Lambeth. All the parts usually made of steel have been formed of this new alloy. For machinery which has to do with water, pump, and engine, &c., when the iron and steel-work rusted fast, manganese-ore is a splendid substitute, as it does not oxidize. The alloy used is a hard mixture, which runs at high speeds without heating, and soon wears down to a smooth and glossy surface. Its strength is about that of mild steel, and it can be forged like the latter metal.

ONLY a few weeks ago we were called upon to chronicle the decease of Mr. Fogg, the President of the China & Japan Trading Co., Limited, and now it is our painful duty to supplement it by recording the death of Mr. J. E. Twombly, the Vice-President of the Company, which occurred at New York on Saturday last, at the age of 55. Deceased took a leading part in organizing and conducting the extensive Company with which he was connected, and his name, well-known in business circles throughout the East, will long continue to be associated with it.—*Nagasaki Baiting Star.*

Peking, 23rd May.—Chang Shu-sheng, Viceroy of the Liang Kwang, has memorialized the Empress to the effect that on account of ill-health and the too great arduousness of his duties he is compelled to resign his office. He can, however, still undertake the command of soldiers. The Empress accepts his resignation, appointing Chang Chih-tung, Governor of Shansi, to fill his office *pro tem.* The Governorship of Shansi will devolve upon Kuo Ping, the Provincial Treasurer. Chang Shu-sheng must await the arrival of Chang Chih-tung, and then assume charge of the Liang Kwang from a view to frontier defence.—*N. C. D. News.*

The *S. S. Gloucester* is the steamer that is bound, if all goes well, to win the tea race this year. She left Hankow at 6 o'clock on Sunday morning, May 18th, in charge of Pilot Fishon, and at 7 o'clock she anchored off Peking Island. The following morning at 4 o'clock she got under weigh, passed Chin-king at 4.30 p.m.; at 5 p.m. she anchored three miles off Kiangyung. At 5 o'clock this morning, May 20th, the agent got under weigh, and at 6 o'clock she was at 10.30, where she waited for the tide till 1.4 p.m., when she started for her run home. She has 5,300 tons of tea on board at \$5 per ton, making a total of 26,500 freight money. Last year the *Gloucester* also the first steamer to leave Hankow with new season tea, got to sea at 10 p.m. on the 22nd May.—*Shanghai Mercury.*

A PERILOUS experience was that revealed lately before the Steam Navigation Board as having been passed through by the captain and crew of the ship *Yarra*, wrecked on the North-west coast of Western Australia. Far from any place of refuge, the vessel went down at a reef and commenced to break up. Two boats were washed away, the third dashed to pieces. The wind was blowing hard, the sea high. The crew put together a raft and started on a voyage of 180 miles to the nearest island, the captain having his wife with him on the frail craft. Five days' tedious work brought them after many perils to the island, where hard work and hard bargaining were required to induce the master of another vessel to bring them back to some Australian port.

An extraordinary mania recently seized a man named W. Peterson, a sailor, residing in a suburb of Sydney. He was drinking some beer in a public-house when he was suddenly seized with what was apparently some kind of epilepsy, and began hitting pieces of the glass from which he was drinking. This conduct considerably alarmed his companions, who immediately seized him, but before he had chucked to stones and swallowed several pieces of glass. He was taken to the hospital, and seemed better, but when a glass of medicine was brought to him, he no longer thought the glass that he commenced to behave in a most violent manner, biting pieces out of the glass and grinding them between the teeth in a manner most painful to hear. He was apparently utterly unconscious of his actions, and the attendants had considerable difficulty in putting him under restraint.

A QUESTION has been raised in Sydney as to the possibility of disease being engendered by the absorption by wood pavements in the streets of noxious filth. This New South Wales Government analyst has made a report on the subject, in which he says that the block of wood stated to have formed part of the wood pavement in King-street, laid three years ago, shows practically no more contamination, actually an Australian hardwood, showed the following relative amounts of absorption (for equal bulk):—American redwood, 140; Baltic deal, 68; Australian hardwood, 13. This shows that the absorption of the Australian hardwood is very greatly less than that of the other woods submitted, being, in fact, less than one-tenth of the absorption of the American redwood.

In most of the towns of Java, it is said, the hotel system is utterly different from that prevails in Australia. There is no such thing as a bar. Spirits and bitters are placed upon the verandah tables before meals, and each one can help himself. There is no extra charge on the bill of six rupees a day. Wines, spirits, or beer are bought by the bottle. What is not used at table is taken to the room. Drunkenness is reported to be quite exceptional.—*Australasian.*

PEACE NEGOTIATIONS BEYOND CONCEPTION.

(Translated from the *Chung-ngo San-pao*.) The history of French aggression in Annam was long to tell. Suffice it to say that the Black Flags had a succession of victories until lately when Bao-minh was lost. The indignation of China was roused and forces were sent both to defend her tributary state and to guard her own frontier. There was no mistake about our right, or about our zeal to maintain it. It was felt that now was the time for China to make her majesty known far and wide, not by peaceful measures. The sword had been unsheathed and no honourable retreat was possible. Not only was Annam implicated China with tears to save it; but the whole world was on the tip-toe of expectation to behold the interests of loyalty and justice maintained. Nothing short of the arbitration of war could settle this matter. So thought the wise. So thought the foolish.

And we, also, having had our eye on the situation, have our thoughts.

First, China has all along held that Annam was her faithful tributary, and had been so for hundreds of years. It was China's plain duty then to cherish Annam, and to prevent this her preserve from being preyed upon by hungry hogs and snakes.

When a rapacious enemy raised a quarrel with Annam and invaded it with much insolence and contempt, China's own good feelings could scarcely have allowed her to sit still and look on, not to speak of the continually which such weakness would provoke. Accordingly, warlike preparations were commenced on a large scale without delay. The men and the munitions of war were ready years ago. It only remained to rub them up and put them to proof when this foreigner neighbor came looking for prey. And besides, the Celestial Majesty had just been aroused by the fall of Bao-minh, and we heard of memorials and decrees to degrade or dismiss those who, it was said, had by neglect and cowardice been the sole cause of this disaster. Having regard to China, negotiations for peace at this juncture are beyond our comprehension.

Second, France, it is well known, has a treaty of amity with China, and she has been guilty of a gratuitous violation of it. She has broken the peace by a supercilious and unwarrantable invasion. To set at naught Annam is to set at naught China. The blame is with France, all the world knows as well as China. One would have thought that China's watchword would have been "To arms and out of this free one you break fast." But no! it is: "Bow down your head and take the affront in a meek and lowly spirit." Presumably, since the Frenchman of the present thus gets so easily possession of Annam, the Frenchman of the future will not be content without larger concessions. Having regard to France, negotiations for peace at this juncture are beyond our comprehension.

Third, when Annam was threatened with a French war, the king and government were at their wit's end. They begged and implored the intervention of China as their only hope. And in the presence of a French army, they could only say: "China shall hear of this, and send up a cry to the Court of Peking for succor in the name of gracious Heaven. So long as timely aid was vouchsafed the faithful tribute rendered for hundreds of years had its due recompense. But now, the tributary State is rent asunder, the gods of the land are insulted, and to tell the King and Government of Annam that our quarrel with France is to stop here, is verily to take their breath away. Having regard to Annam, negotiations for peace at this juncture are beyond our comprehension.

Fourth, Liu and his Black Flags, surviving remnants, fought the French and were victorious in many battles. Their heroism and endurance were again and again recognized at the Court of Peking. With fuel for their belated and desperate fight, they did their very utmost to ward off the calamity which threatened the life of the nation. A defeat is ruin to them. They invoke Heaven, and implore earth, in vain. One might sooner bring rocks to fill the sea than stop the indignation of a bold soldier, or a warm and generous spirit for the wrongs of the blood of these heroic men! And now that their hands are tied, and the enemy's hands on their necks, their mouths are gagged and their breath stopped, what will ultimately be done with them, no one can tell. Having regard to the Black Flags, negotiations for peace at this juncture are beyond our comprehension.

But we have not done yet. The people of China of all classes have had their attention called to this war between France and Annam for two years past, and all nations have watched and discussed it. There has been universal zeal for the success of the righteous cause. At first there were mingled feelings of regret at the ravages of war; but by and by one definite spirit pervaded all minds, and the masses of China were all an impregnable wall of defence. It remained therefore only for the Empire of China to uphold its majesty and prestige, by defending the rights and destroying the oppressor. The issues of war are indeed uncertain, but if China had done all that human power could do, and then accepted the will of Heaven, she would neither have disappointed her people nor incurred the ridicule of cowardice from her enemies. Sometimes ago a communication, purporting to be official, appeared in a Shanghai paper, proposing a summary execution of all who mentioned peace. This was no doubt extravagant language; but passionate zeal for one's king and country is common to all mankind, and strong language may be excused in such a case. Now only think that France up to the day of negotiations was bending all her energies to the annexation of Annam, and that, the peace being made, she will proceed with the treaty in her hands to take her indemnity, by opening trade with Kwangsi and Yunnan, and peering about right and left for opportunities of doing whatever she pleases! No wonder if Frenchmen are overbearing and supercilious without measure in all time to come.

In spite of our natural incompetence we have thus ventured to set forth our views. To do so may be as absurd as attempting to measure the ocean with a gourd, or as the fears of the man of Ki, that the heavens might fall, but we may hope, at least, that this matter, which concerns the stability of the empire, may be well weighed by those in power.

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THE CHARGE OF FRAUD AGAINST B. D. BENJAMIN AT SHANGHAI.

The following is the continuation of the evidence given in this case before Judge Mowat, at Shanghai, on the 20th instant; and also an account of the proceedings on the 21st, when the accused was committed for trial. The report is taken from the *Shanghai Mercury*.

Evidence of Mr. Silas resumed—Mr. Benjamin, so far as I know, never signed any warrants or orders on the godown. I know that Mr. Moncrieff was doing business on his own account. He used to do some business in silk and piece goods. He also did business through Mr. Benjamin in silk, lead, oil and shares. Mr. Benjamin was aware of Mr. Moncrieff doing business in piece goods on one occasion. I mean that Mr. Benjamin had banking account, and that Mr. Moncrieff was in his own godown. At the end of last year the state of the account between Moncrieff and Benjamin was that in December last Moncrieff owed Benjamin Tls. 24,000 on various transactions; besides this there were rents and storage owing to Benjamin. In December last year Mr. Benjamin had banking account, and that Mr. Moncrieff was in his own godown. 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